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Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UK, EI
SUBJECT: REACTION TO DAILY MIRROR'S EDITORIAL ON
NORTHERN IRELAND TROOP WITHDRAWAL

THE FOLLOWING FRONT PAGE ARTICLE FROM THE BELFAST IRISH NEWS SUMS UP LOCAL REACTION TO DAILY MIRROR'S AUGUST 14 EDITORIAL ON CALL FOR A BRITISH WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION:

QUOTE:

REACTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICAL CIRCLES TO THE CALL YESTERDAY BY THE 'DAILY MIRROR,' BRITAIN'S SECOND LARGEST-SELLING NATIONAL NEWSPAPER, FOR A DECLARATION OF INTENT BY THE BRITISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THE NORTH WITHIN FIVE YEARS WAS ENTIRELY PREDICTABLE.

MR. DENIS HAUGHEY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY CHAIRMAN, SAID HIS PARTY HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED THE BRITISH HAD NO PERMANENT COMMITMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND. FOR THE ALLIANCE PARTY MR. JOHN CUSHNAHAN SAID THE DEMAND FOR A WITHDRAWAL WAS BORN OUT OF FRUSTRATION AT THE TOTAL INABILITY OF POLITICIANS TO REACH AGREEMENT - ALTHOUGH HE
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ALSO DESCRIBED THE ARTICLE AS "IRRESPONSIBLE."

MR. HARRY WEST, LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL UNIONIST PARTY, SAID THEY HAD BEEN REPEATEDLY ASSURED BY SECRETARY OF STATE ROY MASON THAT BRITISH TROOPS WOULD NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE NORTH AND THAT NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

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MR. HAUGHEY SAID HIS PARTY HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT THE BRITISH HAD NO PERMANENT COMMITMENT TO NORTHERN IRELAND.

MR. HAUGHEY POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE BRITISH WERE MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN ANYONE ELSE FOR THE TROUBLES OF THE NORTH. "THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY CREATED THE IRISH PROBLEM," HE SAID.

"THE DAILY MIRROR NOW RECOMMENDS THAT THEY SHOULD SIMPLY WASH THEIR HANDS OF THE BUSINESS AND WALK AWAY. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO CLEAR UP THE MESS THEY HAVE MADE BEFORE THEY GO ANYWHERE.
THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WITH THE POWER AND RESOURCES TO MAKE THE RECALCITRANT LOYALIST LEADERSHIP SEE SENSE AND FACE UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. WHEN THEY HAVE DONE THAT, WE IN THE SDLP WOULD NOT DETAIN THEM A MOMENT LONGER."

THE ALLIANCE PARTY LEADER SAID : "THE ALLIANCE PARTY IS OPPOSED TO WITHDRAWAL OR INDEPENDENCE AND IT IS OUR FIRM BELIEF THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S DUTY IS TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SO CREATE THE RIGHT CLIMATE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND."

MR. FRANK MAGUIRE, INDEPENDENT MP FOR FERMANAGH SOUTH
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TYRONE, SAID HE WAS GLAD TO SEE AT LAST "A REALISATION THAT A DECLARATION OF INTENT IS REQUIRED AND THAT PEOPLE WERE COMING TO REALISE THAT THE IRISH PEOPLE MUST DECIDE THEIR OWN FATE.

"IT IS GOOD TO SEE A BEAM OF LIGHT COMING FROM THE DAILY MIRROR," HE ADDED.

MRS. ANNE DICKSON, LEADER OF THE UNIONIST PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND, SAID: "THE TROOPS OUT OF NORTHERN IRELAND BRIGADE," WHICH INCLUDED MANY LEFT-WING LABOUR PARTY MPS, HAD BEEN GIVEN SUPPORT BY THE "DAILY MIRROR" COMMENT.

"DESPITE THE QUALIFICATION THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE GRADUALLY OVER FIVE YEARS," SHE SAID, "THIS CAN ONLY BE SEEN AS FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE IRA AND A BOOST TO THEIR PROPAGANDA MACHINE. MR. CALLAGHAN MUST STATE WHETHER THIS WILL BE HIS PARTY'S POLICY IN THE COMING ELECTION."

PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN IN BELFAST SAID THE 'DAILY MIRROR' IN REITERATING THE DEMANDS OF SINN FEIN FOR A BRITISH WITHDRAWAL, RECOGNISED THE FACT THAT BRITISH

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INTERFERENCE IN IRISH AFFAIRS HAD BEEN A FAILURE OVER THE CENTURIES AND ONLY THE IRISH PEOPLE THEMSELVES CAN SOLVE THEIR OWN DESTINY.

AND THE IRISH REPUBLICAN PUBLICITY BUREAU ISSUED A STATEMENT SAYING THAT THE EDITORIAL REPRESENTED A MAJOR SHIFT IN POLICY FOR A SECTION OF THE BRITISH RULING CLASS - "FROM A MORALISTIC IMPERIALISM THEY HAVE PREDICTABLY MOVED TO NATIONALIST CHAUVINISM (BRING THE BOYS HOME).

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"WHAT HAS MOTIVATED THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BRITISH ARMY IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAS BEEN A DESIRE FOR IRISH SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE AND UNITY," THEY SAID "AND AN END TO THE SIX COUNTY LOYALIST ASCENDANCY WHICH IS THE LEGACY OF BRITISH COLONIAL RULE IN IRELAND.

"THERE WILL BE NO PEACE IN IRELAND UNTIL THE PEOPLE CAN COME TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CENTURIES AS EQUAL CITIZENS TO ESTABLISH A FREE AND JUST SOCIETY WHICH WE BELIEVE MEANS A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC."

THE IRSP WELCOMED THE MIRROR'S CALL FOR A BRITISH WITHDRAWAL "AS A RECOGNITION OF WHAT THE ORDINARY PEOPLE OF ENGLAND WANT."

THEY SAID THAT THIS REALISATION WAS WHAT JUSTIFIED THE MEANS OF THE BLANKET PROTEST IN H BLOCK FOR POLITICAL STATUS BUT REJECTED THE IDEA OF SIX-COUNTY INDEPENDENCE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY SAID THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND MADE IT CLEAR ON NUMEROUS

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OCCASIONS WHAT SOLUTION THEY WANTED.

"ONE HAS ONLY TO LOOK AT THE RESULT OF THE 1973
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BORDER POLL, WHEN THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE HERE VOTED TO STAY WITHIN THE UK AND SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE CONVENTION REPORT IS THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT DESIRED.

"THE LAST THING WE WANT IS FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO PULL OUT AND WE FEEL THAT THE DAILY MIRROR SHOULD TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THE FACTS."

MR. FERGUS MC ATEER, CHAIRMAN OF THE IRISH INDEPENDENCE PARTY SAID: "WE WERE FORMED AND NAMED AS A PARTY LAST AUTUMN TO PURSUE THE OBJECTIVE OF IRISH INDEPENDENCE AND THE DAILY MIRROR'S COMMENTS REFLECT THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF IIP POLICY.

"LET US HOPE THAT FURTHER STATESMANLIKE DECLARATIONS OF FAITH IN THE ABILITY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE MAY COME FROM OTHER INFLUENTIAL QUARTERS IN BRITAIN AND THAT THIS LONE BRITISH VOICE MAY SWELL TO A TRUE COMMONSENSE CHORUS.

"DARE WE ALSO HOPE THAT SOME OF THE MORE BASHFUL SECTIONS OF IRISH OPINION WILL TAKE HEART AND JOIN THE GREAT MOVEMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE - THE ONLY REALISTIC SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. THE DAWN OF FREEDOM IS NEAR." UNQUOTE.MURRAY

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